

The Newsletter of Medal Collectors of America

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Coming Events

August 17, 2006 - MCA meeting at Denver
ANA @ 3:00 p.m. Room 706.

October 17-19, 2006 - Indian Peace
Medals I of John J. Ford, Jr.

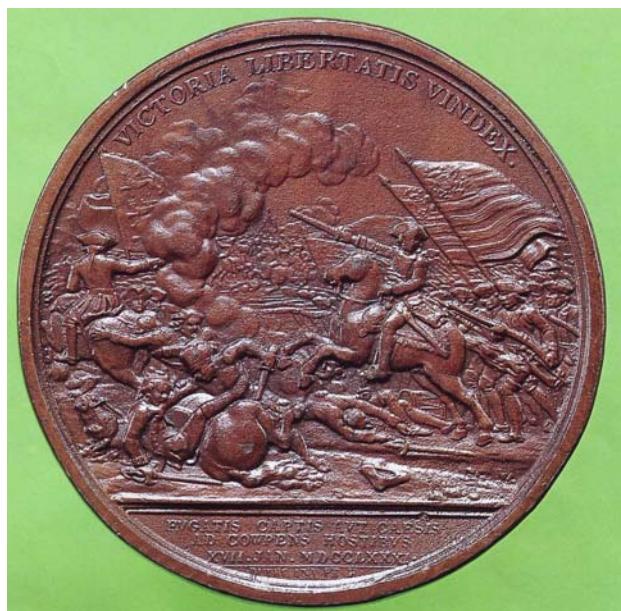
Stack's auction schedule is published on
their website www.stackss.com since last minute
changes to the Ford schedule have been known to
occur unexpectedly.

From the Editor

Much of the May-June issue was devoted to Ford XIV, an offering of Betts medals without compare. New owners of these fabulous pieces are basking in the glow of their possessions—hopefully, the basking will lead to a plethora of articles on the treasures they have acquired. There is no end of education that the Ford material can provide.

We all know that John J. Ford, Jr. was fastidious-to-the-point-of-fussy in his collecting. That point was well made in the forewords to the Kolbe sales of books from the Ford library. We own a lovely HONOS ET VIRTU Indian peace medal, ex Garrett, that John had bought at the Garrett sale. Over time, he began to have doubts about the authenticity of the piece—10% type doubts—and these nagged at him until he came to the point where he no longer wanted to own it. We bought it from him and, even if we harbored nagging doubts (which we don't), you would have to steal it from us at gun point.

Aside from his fascinating collection of colonial copies, Ford owned only original pieces. It is difficult to fault a numismatist of his stature but, in his respect, we do. Many of our early medals are prohibitively rare but this did not stop nineteenth century collectors from commissioning casts and electrotypes. Some of these copies are superbly executed, as per the illustration below. Aesthetically, they would grace any cabinet and, having the same legends and devices, they teach us the same history lessons that are taught by original strikings. Although spurned by Ford (and most dealers), we have little doubt that this form of collecting will regain the respectability that it once had.



Book Review

The medals of John Law form a highly specialized but nonetheless fascinating segment of our hobby. Little has been written for the past 100 years but, in the interim, much new information has come to light. This book adds new discoveries to the series and deletes some that have been included by past authors. In addition to a full description of each medal, the author offers a rarity guide and a concordance with past systems of attributions, as well as biographical information on John Law and an economic analysis of his system.

“Medals concerning John Law and the Mississippi System” by ANS Trustee John Adams is now available for purchase from the David Brown Book Company at:
<http://www.oxbowbooks.com/bookinfo.ctm?id=60267>. Price is \$75.

Goetz Auction in Kassel

(by Steve Pelligrini)

On May 19th the enormous Böttcher collection of Karl Goetz medals was auctioned at the Ramada-Plaza in Kassel, Germany. I think it is safe to say that this was the largest auction ever devoted exclusively to the works of a single medallist. The auction’s agent, cataloguer and its auctioneer was Harald Möller, the well-known dealer in German coins and medals. Möller sandwiched the Goetz auction between two others. Immediately proceeding was an auction of general interest German medals from the renaissance through the late 1980’s. Following the Goetz sale was the closing auction of Herr Böttcher’s extensive collection of Kaiserreich gold, modern silver talers and German colonial coins. But certainly it was the Goetz medals offered on the second day that drew the crowd and filled the book.

Böttcher’s collection of Goetz medals was nearly complete. Goetz’ 50 year opus consists of about 750 medals and pattern coins. The Böttcher’s auction held 1,474 lots including varieties in composition, size and

format. Actually the collection may well have been far more complete than is reflected in the catalogue. The few Goetz medals missing from the auction might have been withdrawn or been cherry picked in advance. And most interesting of all are the post-auction reports that a box of Goetz medals had been overlooked and would appear at some later date.

One surprising absentee was the iconic WW.I ‘Lusitania Sinking’ (K-156) medal of 1915. Over the years some have credited this medal with turning the tide of American public opinion in favor of entering the war against Germany in 1916. Also among the missing was the historically significant and very rare large cast bronze ‘Munich Agreement 1938’ medal (K549) - with its’ jugate portraits of Hitler, Mussolini, Chamberlain & Daladier. But there were no complaints. There were more than enough opportunities for even the most enthusiastic buyers.

For a collection this large and impressive in its scope, the catalogue that accompanied its sale was most unimpressive. The photos were not of the greatest quality, although, as I understand it, they didn’t come cheap. There were no descriptions of the lots aside from the bare essentials: Keinast number, metal, size and grade. A little more effort in producing a first rate catalogue would not have been out of place. Even a brief biographical intro of the medallist Goetz or at least a note about the industrious Herr Böttcher who’d built the collection would have been interesting. A numismatic essay placing Goetz the medallist in context with his contemporaries would have put the collection in its modern perspective. I have to admit to being spoiled rotten by the boffo catalogues that have accompanied Stack’s serial auction of the J.J. Ford, Jr. collection. But although this catalogue is very mundane, as most German auction catalogues are, I have no doubt that it is destined to become an instant classic – at least with Goetz collectors like myself. It seemed obvious from the first that the catalogue would serve for

years to come as the checklist-pricelist for collectors and dealers alike. In fairness though, it only purports to be an auction catalogue and so it is.

Although Goetz medals have always been popular there are today many more collectors interested in these medals than ever before. As a result, the prices of Goetz medals have risen dramatically over the past 4-5 years. I believe some of the influx of new Goetz collectors has to do with the advent of EBay. Its vast numismatic listings afford great exposure for material previously unfamiliar to America's coin collectors. Surely this is where most US collectors got their first exposure to Goetz medals. I don't know one collector who wasn't stopped in his tracks by his first glimpse of Goetz' infamous 1920 'Black Shame' medal (K-262). I know the first time I saw it my reaction was 'What the Hell is that?' And that is, usually the beginning of a new Goetz collector.

A word about US collectors & European auctions: a US bidder in this auction worked under the dual handicap of a falling, 70-cent dollar and the added 15% Aufgeld (idiot tax). Between the two we US bidders paid a whopping 45% premium on our wins.

The over promotion and exorbitant prices of US coins has caused a rush to other, more affordable areas of numismatics, thus creating hundreds of newly minted medal collectors. As mentioned above this influx of collectors now working on collections of Goetz medals has caused prices to climb. These collectors are competing for what are basically all scarce medals. The prices realized at this auction bear this out. I noticed quite a few five figure bids, and four figure prices were common. Prices like these are almost unheard of in an auction of 20th century medals. It appears that all things 'Goetz' have become expensive. A signed and annotated first edition of Gunther Keinast's 1968 book 'Medals of Karl Goetz' brought \$1,000+ in a recent George Kolbe auction.

In the weeks leading up to the auction there was 'chatter' about this auction being too much of a good thing; that the market couldn't absorb so many expensive medals, or so many medals of such finite interest. However, in the actual event, these predictions didn't pan out. Although many medals went without bids, a far healthier percentage sold.

It is instructive to look at what types of medals sold and what types were left behind. A few of the rarest large bronze cast medals with very high reserves, almost all of the medals struck in platinum and gold and some of the 58mm satirical-political medals cast in silver were left without bids. Of these types that did sell most sold without competition at the Opening Bid-Reserve or a tick or two more. I was very surprised that many of the historic political medals, especially those larger examples cast in silver, were not snapped up immediately. These satirical medals are the most popular and historically important of Goetz' medals. They are also the most collectable and are usually readily available in either bronze or iron casts. However these same medals when cast in silver are among the rarest and, one would think, the most sought after medals of the entire Goetz series. Goetz cast these 58mm satirical medals in silver only at the specific request of a paying customer. Today, these cast silver medals exist in editions of 2 or 3 pieces. For the majority of this 175 piece series of satirical medals there were none at all cast or struck in silver.

Those collectors who have delved deeper into the Goetz series know that the medallist was far more than a caster of bronze editorials and war propaganda. His art medals 'made in the antique style' comprise an amazingly beautiful gallery of princes of the Bavarian Church, Bavarian Royalty, heroic figures out of German history as well as homely portraits and decorative medals advertising German corporate & bureaucratic life. Most affecting of his art medals are the empathetic portraits of Germany's comfortable

pre-war bourgeoisie; the solid middle-class of Kaiserreich Germany: merchants, doctors, artists, bishops and teachers. Goetz modeled his portraits in the style of the northern renaissance masters and often succeeded in creating comparable quality. He enjoyed working in the style of the baroque and, in his youngest years as a Parisian medalist, Goetz's work fits squarely into the French art nouveau tradition. Many of his best portrait medals represent the pinnacle of Goetz's achievement as an artist. They are also, as a type, the rarest of his works - but they do not always sell well. There are only a handful of specialist-collectors who appreciate this largely unknown facet of Goetz's art and who are willing to pay the high price of owning a collection of these medals.

Not at all surprising the best selling medals of the auction were the satirical-political medals of 1913-1923. This series began with the events leading to WW.I and continued on into the revolutionary post-war period. The prices paid for these relatively common medals reached new heights, many selling for 7x estimate, and more. Also popular with bidders were the banal medals of the 3d Reich and the many Hitler portraits. Goetz's Hitler medals have always sold for a healthy (or unhealthy) premium. They have consistently sold for higher prices than the Hitler medals produced by his contemporaries - those that were allowed to continue working under the nazi regime. Some medallists, the associates of Goetz's youth, were banned under the Nazis. Most notable was the great expressionist medallist Ludwig Gies. These were the same young medallists who early in the century had participated with Goetz in forming the Munich Sessionist movement, or Munich School of Medallists. As a group they had dedicated themselves to creating new and uniquely German form of medallic art: sculptural, forceful, rough and ready, free of the painterly French influences so universally prevalent at the time. In 1914 these artists to a man (and woman) dedicated their talents and

energies to Germany's wartime cause. In a time of national emergency they gave what they had to give. After 1933 none of this counted for a lead pfennig.

So here one comes to the medals Goetz produced during the 1933-1944 era. It is sad to see how completely he had abandoned the fiery artistic ideals of his youth in order to survive and please an alien regime. A good number of the medals by Goetz produced during the 3d Reich years is just a shade better than the work cranked out by medallic hacks like Party favorite old 'Pinback' Klein. Poor Klein had himself been a promising medallist during WW.I. What happened to him between 1919 and 1932 I don't know. Do we judge these men too harshly? Luckily, the medals speak for themselves.

A few years ago Germany passed legislation that loosened-up restrictions on buying and selling collectable artifacts of the Nazi era. Since then collecting Hitler medals has become a hot area in German numismatics - and prices have risen accordingly. Missing from this rich collection is an example of Goetz' very rare 1942 5RM pattern that carries Hitler's portrait on its obverse. One of the few collectable examples of this rare coin was sold by Stacks' a couple of years ago. Apparently Herr Böttcher was not the winner of that lot as it was not among the pattern coins offered.

In addition to the sheer volume of the material, there may have been other inhibiting factors at work on bidder enthusiasm. The estimate-reserves were in many cases unrealistically high, especially for those pieces struck in gold. Also, given the reported financial resources of real estate magnate Böttcher, the collection was surprisingly uneven in its quality. Again I have to note the lack of attribution as not one medal was listed with any type of provenance. Perhaps most annoying of all was the lack of attribution or acknowledgment that among the lots were a few later cast medals by Karl Goetz's son Guido. In coin collecting terms this is the

difference between an original coin and a re-strike. American collectors and dealers have nicknamed these later casts as 'Guidos'. Traditionally these later casts were noted as such and were priced accordingly (\$40-60). However in the last few years many dealers have stopped making the distinction and have stopped noting it to potential customers. When Guido Goetz was alive and active in casting medals while using his father's shop models, everything was open and above board. Now the only way to tell the difference between an original and a later cast 'Guido' is by the medal's patina or finish – or as Kienast noted, by handling many hundreds of examples.

I have often heard Karl Goetz described as the most popular medallist in Germany during his lifetime. During the 56 years since his death he's become the most collected medallist in the world. Both these statements are probably true. Only if the second part of that statement is true would a one-man auction of nearly 1,800 items have been attempted, or been successful and profitable.

- Kienast, Gunther W. 'The Medals of Karl Goetz.' Artus 1967.
- Kienast, Gunther W. 'Goetz II, A Supplement to The Medals of Karl Goetz.' Artus. 1986.

The Charles Carroll Restrikes

(by Leonard Augsburger)

The Charles Carroll restrikes of 1976, executed by the United States Mint as commissioned by the Baltimore Museum of Art, represented one of many medallic efforts to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Congressional activity on the medal began in 1974, taken up by the Senate Banking Committee under S. 4111. The congressional office of management and budget (OMB) stalled the bill for a time, first failing to deliver a requested opinion on the bill, and later

suggesting that the project be completely subcontracted to private industry.

The Senate committee pointed out the project was to be completely reimbursed by the Baltimore Museum, and further that a medal of such national character had traditionally been produced by the U.S. Mint. The OMB ultimately relented and the Carroll project was restarted in the summer of 1975.

The original medal, Julian PE-6, commemorates Charles Carroll of Carrollton, Maryland, "upon entering his 90th year", a backhanded way of acknowledging Carroll's 89th birthday on September 20th, 1826. The reverse of the medal is further inscribed, "THE SURVIVING SIGNER OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE AFTER THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY", an allusion to the fact that both Thomas Jefferson and John Adams (no, not that one) died on July 4th, 1826, the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration. Not surprisingly, the Ford sale (Ford V:220-228), was replete with all manner of Carroll originals, including one of three known in gold, four in silver, and three in copper. Capping off the presentation was a contemporary counterfeit traced to the Bushnell sale of 1882. Ever the hoarder, Ford's array represented nearly one third of the known population of this medal engraved by Christian Gobrecht.

It was thought at first the restrike medal would have to be reproduced from extant specimens and photographs. Eventually the original dies, along with one original medal in silver, were supplied by Miss Mary Donovan, who had family connections to Charles Carroll. The dies and original medal were sent from the Baltimore Museum to the Mint, where they were received in July, 1975. An internal memo within the Mint indicates that "these items are of great value", and requests a cost estimate for the required engraving work. An estimate of \$3500 was returned, with a note indicating that the original dies had become too soft for the standard hubbing techniques, and that a series

of plaster casts, reductions, and enlargements would be required. Beyond the engraving, the trial strikes were estimated at \$610.

The dies and original medal were returned to the Baltimore Museum of Art in August, 1975.

Legislation passed to the House, there covered under H.R. 3427. The bill was approved April 1, 1976, and became Public Law 94-257. In June, 1976, the Baltimore Museum of Art sent back the original dies and silver medal to the Mint along with authorization to begin the project. The Mint invoiced the Baltimore Museum for \$4200 on July 27, 1976, to cover the cost of engraving and trial strikes. This was paid August 30, 1976. The first trial strike was delivered on September 22, 1976. Following acceptance of the trial piece, medals were then delivered to the museum in two shipments of three hundred each (in October), with a third and final shipment of fourteen hundred in December. The mint charged \$4.75 for the medals, which the Baltimore Museum in turn marketed at \$10.75.

In March, 1978, the mint offered the remaining 124 medals in stock to the Baltimore Museum of Art at three dollars each. The edition was apparently not a sellout, since the Museum declined the offer. Stella Hackel, director of the mint, authorized the destruction of the remaining medals in the Mint stores. The restrike remains an economical alternative to an original Carroll medal, identical in all respects with the exception of the bicentennial tribute ("1776-1976") added beneath the bust of Carroll on the obverse of the restrike.

Aside from this more prominent restrike delivered by the U.S. mint to the Baltimore Museum of Art, the Hanover Numismatic Society of Hanover, PA also created a restrike of the Carroll medal in their series of Gobrecht-themed medals issued annually from 1966 to 1981. The 1976 piece featured the obverse of the Carroll medal along with the Gobrecht bust

which appeared on all of these medals, while the 1977 emission featured the Carroll reverse.

These lower quality pieces will not be confused with either the original or U.S. mint restrikes. A full set in bronze is in the ANS collection; silver pieces are scarce as the Hanover club struck fewer of these as silver prices increased.

Bibliography:

National Archives, Record Group 104. Case File on Commemorative Medals (entry 328-O), Charles Carroll file. Archives locator 450/67/8/5, box 2.

Census Request

The well-known Franklin Natus Boston medal comes with two reverse designs. One is dated 1784 and the other 1786. Please let the editor know of specimens owned by you (or others), listing what metal (silver or bronze) and whether an original or restrike. Many thanks. (jadam@ahh.com)

Letters to the Editor

John,

The recent Ford XIV blockbuster sale of Betts and related medals contained examples of the two well known Captain Cook medals with three-quarters facing bust:

Lot 479: Reverse: KILL'D/BY THE INDIANS/AT O'WHY' HEE/FEBRUARY 14/1779. White metal. (Betts 554; MH 1919, 376; BHM 219; Eimer 779). Lot 480: Reverse: COURAGE/AND/PERSEVERANCE/BORN 1728.DIED 1779. Bronze. (Betts 555; MH 1919, 375; BHM 218; Eimer 778).

I examined both of these medals during the viewing, and also looked carefully at the excellent enlarged images on the Stack's

website. It is apparent that the obverse of lot 479 is a later die state than the obverse of 480: on 479 the hair and tie to the left of Cook's neck, the small area of wig to the left and above his left eye, and portions of the blouse and jacket adjacent to the end of the legend all lack detail, clearly indicating that the die from which this obverse was struck had been planed-down. The obverse of lot 480, however, shows all of these features in detail.

Furthermore, there are a great many tiny raised pimples on Captain Cook's face on the white metal example, clear evidence that it was struck from a rusty die. The obverse of lot 480 does not show these. My questions therefore are: when was this medal with the KILL'D BY THE INDIANS reverse, which was struck from a rusty, planed-down die, actually made? Do any examples of it exist which do not show these flaws? For that matter, are there any examples which can be definitely accepted as contemporary strikings? I note that BHM 219 indicates that there are cast examples of this medal which may have been made later, but this is not relevant, as lot 479 of the Stack's sale is definitely a struck piece.

Suggestion for a research project (not by me, thank you): examine the very extensive files of Sotheby and other London sale catalogues at the ANS in order to determine the earliest public offerings of these medals.

Richard Margolis

We looked at our examples of the two medals and they are indeed as Richard described. Therefore, he, Eimer and the BHM agree in placing Betts 554 after Betts 555. However, Richard's insightful question is "How much later?" Anyone?—Ed.

Hi John,

Here is an interesting inquiry from a non-member (without E-mail [(401) 461-

4156]), who advised me he is a retired bank branch manager) that you may wish to forward, or publish. I know we have established policy not to do appraisals, but this one is a cut above the norm. In a conversation, he advised that the medal is 38 mm. in diameter, and 3 mm. thick.

Dear Mr. Tayman,

I'm writing in response to the article in Coin World regarding Thomas Gates' recount of various medals relating to Vice Adm. Lord Horatio Nelson in the November issue of The MCA Advisory, the newsletter of the MCA Advisory, the newsletter of the Medal Collectors of America.

I have in my possession a copper medal covering the same subject matter. I have not known of a source that could shed some light on what I have.

A treasure or a keepsake? My medal is described as follows:

Obverse: Horatio Viscount Nelson

Portrait

Born 29 September 1759

Died 21 October 1805

Reg No. 311420

Reverse: Fordyant Lord Nelson's Flagship

Picture of Ship

Commenced Building 1789

Launched at Plymouth 1798

Wrecked at Blackpool

June 16th 1897

Medal struck from copper of vessel after breaking up.

I would appreciate any information you could give me to enable me to determine the desirability of this medal. Registration number 311420 would seem to indicate many were made.

I have no idea how this English medal got to R.I.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Thomas P. Wallace

John

The latest MCA Advisory has arrived and another Ford-fest it is too! Since you draw attention to Warren Baker's mention of the Reford Sale, held by Sotheby's in Toronto in October 1968, may I add my two cent's worth. The Reford Collection was a small adjunct to a much greater collection of Canadiana paintings and prints. It was sent to London where I catalogued it (and it was not a bad effort for a 23 year old, unfamiliar with the wonders of Indian Chief Medals, even if I say so myself!), and then I traveled with it back to Toronto for the sale.

David Spink attended with Mr. and Mrs. Norweb, for whom he hoped to buy. Warren Baker bought two lots! But it was the likes of Judge Sam Weir, who caused the excitement, when he bought the "Happy While United" medal, and others including Peter Winkworth (whose collection of drawings and paintings were acquired for the Canadian nation shortly before his death last summer), Warda Drummond and Charles de Volpi - all Canadiana collectors.

And, of course, John Ford was there viewing thoroughly (and cleaning his hands with wipes after each lot). He imparted knowledge and appreciated the captive audience I provided. It was the way to learn. I was to see more of him the following year when I worked for Sotheby's in New York and would visit the New Netherlands, and from then onwards we kept in touch. I have a copy of *The Coin Collector's Journal* for May - June 1951, with an article on the "Copper Company of Upper Canada," along with a dedication from April 1983 (when it arrived out of the blue!), "For Daniel Fearon - From an aging 'boy wonder' - J. J. Ford"

If permitted a final line of self-promotion - a copy of the Reford auction

catalogue is listed for sale on my web site, www.danielfearon.com.

Daniel Fearon

John,

I'm currently researching a small group of medals produced in 1916 to commemorate the capture of the British ship HMS Appum by the German raider SMS Moewe. On board the Appum the German boarding party discovered a million in gold ingots stuffed under the Captain's bunk. The Appum, its captain and crew, after being lightened of its load, was sailed as a prize ship to the U.S. This was February 1916. By the time the German skeleton crew of sailor-jailors under the command of a Lt. Otto Berg. By the time they reached the U.S. and went through the maritime courts the U.S. had declared war on Germany and the German crew were jailed as POW's. Later from the military base in Texas, Berg and his men escaped and made a dash for the Mexican border. (Ya can't keep 'em in and ya can't keep 'em out). They were quickly caught and returned to captivity where they remained for the duration. I have four German commemorative and satirical medals in my collection that refer to this incident. I'd like to send scans of the medals with their specs and briefly tell the story of these two ships. Does this sound like something appropriate for the Advisory?

Steve Pellegrini